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A

PLAN

OF

FEMALE EDUCATION,

BY

J. RICE

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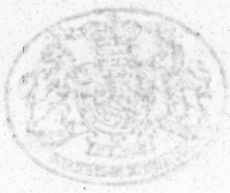

A

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OF

FEMALE EDUCATION.

TO form the minds of Youth to knowledge, to give them juſt notions of their moral, religious, and ſocial Duties, and to enable them to uſe their talents and façulties, with preciſion and effect, has ever been conſidered as the great end of Education; and of the higheſt importance, not only to the welfare of the individual, but to the Community at large. Every improvement therefore, upon the methods generally uſed for attaining this valuable end, is peculiarly worthy the attention and encouragement of mankind.

While it is univerſally boaſted in every plan of Education offered to the public, that great care will be taken of the MORALS of Children; is it TRUE, that a ſyſtematical method of TEACHING morals, is purſued in any School in this Kingdom? If it be *not true*, any alteration that leads to ſo important an end is greatly wanted, and cannot fail of being highly beneficial to Society.

Will it be ſaid, that "the conductors of our Seminaries take every poſſible method of inculcating Morals, by obliging their Scholars to read the beſt books on thoſe ſubjects"—it may juſtly be anſwered, that the preſent mode of teaching Children to read, having no other object, or tendency, than to make them acquainted with the mere WORDS of a Language, it is next to an impoſſibility that *what* they read, ſhould produce any proper, or permanent effect, on the Underſtanding. Beſides, the language of ſuch Books is much above the comprehenſion of *Children*, and requires *other* aid, than barely the knowledge of the *Words* in which they are compoſed, to come at the SENSE of them. No one can juſtly be ſaid to READ, what he does not *Underſtand*.

ſtand. Hence, it is a ſelf-evident truth, that to enable Children to *read,* ſo as to acquire *knowledge,* the FIRST object in their Education ſhould be the Cultivation of their UNDERSTANDING.

With a view to render an improvement upon the preſent Syſtem of Educating the Fair Sex more extenſively known, as well as to excite others to tread in the ſame path. Mr. Rice, who has made the art of improving the Human Mind his peculiar ſtudy for more than twenty Years, has been induced to ſubmit the following plan of inſtruction to the Public, whereby he hopes it will fully appear, that HIS method of teaching the Engliſh Language, ſupplies what is confeſſedly wanting in the preſent Syſtem of Education, and muſt, neceſſarily, cultivate the underſtanding and improve the heart, without neglecting the acquiſition of any external accompliſhment.

To read and write the Engliſh Language with Propriety and Elegance, is generally allowed to be an important accompliſhment in the Education of the Fair Sex, by means of which alone their Faculties can be opened at ſo early

a period ; yet the few, comparatively, who attain a tolerable proficiency in either, is a ſtriking proof how little attention is paid to theſe neceſſary and moſt uſeful articles of knowledge, by thoſe who take upon them the Cultivation of the more amiable part of the Creation, or even by Parents themſelves—who, it is preſumed, if they were *fully* acquainted with the advantages that would reſult to their Children, from their being properly taught their OWN *Language*, would inſiſt on its being conſidered as a *leading* article in their Education. The mind receiving fit Impreſſions at firſt, and Reaſon, in its dawn, being aſſiſted to view all objects thro' a proper Medium, it will, ever after, flow with eaſe and vigour, in its natural Channel, without being obſtructed by crude, indigeſted, or confuſed Ideas, the general cauſe of the Errors, Misfortunes, and eccentric wanderings of Mankind.

To underſtand a Language thoroughly, the Pupil ſhould be able to SPEAK and READ it with *Propriety*, and to WRITE it *Correctly* and *Elegantly*, agreeable to its general diviſion into ſound and ſenſe.

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The requiſites to a juſt pronunciation are a good voice, and an articulate delivery. Theſe therefore, become the firſt objects of a Maſter's attention.

How much *both* are neglected in Education, the very few perſons to be met with, who poſſeſs the free, and full uſe of the organs of ſound, and diſplay an *improved, harmonized* Voice, together with the innumerable *defects* in ſpeech, that ſo abundantly prevail, may fully prove. The excuſe generally made for either is that they are *natural.* This is ſo far from being true, that not one inſtance in ten thouſand can be produced, wherein the defect, or impediment, either of the voice or utterance, is derived from NATURAL cauſes; the former reſulting wholly from the want of cultivation and improvement, the latter from habit, ignorance, inattention, or affectation. In proof of which, the writer dares to affirm, that in all his practice, he never yet met with a Voice that he could not *greatly improve,* and ſcarcely with a ſingle defect, that would not yield to aſſiduity, and perſeverance, in a proper courſe of inſtruction.

Articulation,

Articulation, is merely mechanical—the effect of habit, It may be ſaid to be perfect, when every letter in a ſyllable, is uttered with its *due* quantity of ſound, and every ſyllable in a word is diſtinctly pronounced. This is the BASIS of all elegance in ſpeaking and reading : The Pupils therefore ſhould be taught to Articulate *forcibly*, and with the utmoſt degree of *preciſion* ; to become minutely acquainted with the Organs of Speech, and their peculiar uſes in forming all the Articulate voices in the Language. By perſevering in ſuch a mode of Inſtruction, not only every defect in the organs of Speech is prevented, but a thick, mumbling, heſitating, precipitate, or ſtammering utterance, together with every provinciality of dialect certainly removed. Children who are early accuſtomed to ſpeak articulately, becoming as fond of it as of dancing, or of any other art, merely external, and which ſerves to diſplay their *perſons* to advantage.

Next to a juſt, and firm Articulation, is the knowledge of the nature, uſe, and ſeat of the accent, in pronunciation ; which the Scholar muſt be accuſtomed invariably to obſerve. Nothing

thing is more ungraceful, or characteriſtic of a *defective* Education, than the uſe of *falſe* or improper accents, in reading or ſpeaking; as they bewilder the mind of the hearer, and divert his attention from the *Senſe*, to the mere SOUND, of what is read or ſpoken—Nor ſhould leſs care be taken to give them a juſt and accurate idea of *Emphaſis*—its EXCLUSIVE force, its great importance in conveying the SENSE of what is to be delivered, and in what manner it is to be formed.—Laſtly, they muſt be thoroughly inſtructed in the uſe and conſequence, of the *pauſes* and *ſtops* in reading and ſpeaking; not only as they ſerve to diſtinguiſh the ſeveral ſentences in a diſcourſe, and members in a ſentence; but as they are productive of Energy, Grace, or Dignity, in pronouncing what is written.

Thus far concerning the *mechanical* part of Language, its SOUND. With reſpect to it's SENSE or the *ſignificant* part of reading; it being impoſſible to read with *propriety*, what is not preciſely UNDERSTOOD, ſuch books only ſhould be put into the hands of the Pupils, as are beſt calculated

culated to improve the *judgment* and *underſtanding* while they rectify, and expand the heart and affections.

Having attained ſuch a proficiency in reading, as readily to pronounce words at *ſight*, the Scholars are made acquainted with ſuch Authors as require ſome exertion of the UNDERSTANDING perfectly to comprehend the *Senſe*. Of theſe, ſuch as treat of the knowledge of OURSELVES, and of the human HEART, will not only be allowed to be moſt *proper*, but the moſt EASY to comprehend—becauſe nothing can be written on ſuch a ſubject, but what may be readily explained to thoſe of the moſt *moderate* Capacity, and applied *immediately* to their OWN HEARTS. It requiring no peculiar powers of Mind, as moſt other Sciences do, to become very early acquainted with our Tempers and Diſpoſitions, our habits of thinking and acting, as well as with what reaſon and common ſenſe point out, as our ſocial, relative, and religious duties. And if it be allowed, that happineſs depends more upon the due regulation of our Paſſions, Appetites and Affections, than on our, Rank, or Wealth,

Wealth, the being *early* inſtructed in this kind of knowledge, will, it is preſumed, be conſidered as of the higheſt, and moſt important conſequence to the welfare of the Pupil.

To this end, Maſon's Tract on Self-knowledge is firſt put into their hands—a work equally valuable for the *method* in which ſo complex a ſubject is treated, as for the eaſe and perſpicuity of the Language. This they are required not only to read, but to give proof that they *underſtand* it, ſentence by ſentence; whereby they not only perfect themſelves in the mechanical part of the Language, above-mentioned, but imbibe Maxims and Sentiments of *moral* and *religious* duty, that, from the mode in which they are *enforced*, cannot fail of making proper and permanent impreſſions on the *Heart*.

The mind thus prepared for *higher* degrees of inſtruction, by being taught to turn its eye inward, and ſurvey *itſelf*; it is led to *external* objects, and to the contemplation of ſuch parts of *natural* knowledge, as may delight the imagination, while they *increaſe* the ſtock of ideas before

fore acquired, and offer to the young mind the moſt amiable leſſons of *benevolence* and *humanity*. To this end, Thomſon's Seaſons are given them to read; in which they proceed as with the former Author, progreſſively acquainting themſelves with the Poet's *Senſe*, line by line; while the utmoſt care is taken, that they examine the meaning of every word *new* to them, by the aſſiſtance of a Dictionary, *writing down* the *word*, and its SIGNIFICATION. By this mode they not only acquire a more extenſive ſtock of IDEAS, but of proper and ſignificant WORDS whereby to *expreſs* them. This acquiſition of words and ideas, however, requires a knowledge of GRAMMAR, which treats of their Uſe, Relation, and Arrangement. To this they are *methodically* conducted, not by obliging them to load the memory with a ſet of rules, totally unintelligible to young minds, and which are too numerous and complex for them to apply to any *uſeful* purpoſe, but by the more eaſy and inſtructive way of Converſation; acquainting them, gradually, with the names and natures of the ſeveral ſorts of words, or parts of ſpeech, till they can readily point them out,

next

next with their Relation to each other in a ſentence, and laſtly, with the whole of *grammatical Conſtruction*. From hence they are inſenſibly led to form the diſtinctions, which conſtitute the different ſpecies of *ſtyle*, viz. the Colloquial, Hiſtorical, Poetical, &c.—The uſe and nature of Imagery, Figure, and Metaphor, in writing; and all the proprieties and delicacies of Language.

Thomſon was no leſs a Philoſopher than a Poet, and the truths of *philoſophy*, cloathed in *claſſical* and *poetical* Language, will, it may be ſaid, be much *above* the Comprehenſion of *Children*: To obviate this objection, the *philoſophical* parts are explained to them, in the Language of *common life*, and illuſtrated in ſo familiar a manner, as cannot fail of making a permanent impreſſion on the underſtanding.

From this Author, the tranſition to ſubjects more ſolemn and ſublime, is natural and eaſy. The moſt claſſical and elegant Authors, in PROSE and VERSE, become, of courſe, the ſucceeding

ſucceeding objects of Study; in which the various affections and paſſions of the *human heart*, the moſt affecting and ſublime truths of *religion* and *morality*, together with their *influence* upon the events of PAST AGES, are delineated with all the force of Language.—To read theſe, however, with propriety, requires not only the right underſtanding of the AUTHOR, but the higheſt improvement of the VOICE—which, by *peculiar* methods, is to be drawn forth, all its latent powers called into Exertion, improved and ſtrengthened when weak; meliorated and ſoftened into Harmony, when harſh and rough, and endued with *inflection* ſufficient to expreſs all the infinitely-varied combinations of Paſſion or Affection.

By this gradual ſcale of Inſtruction, is the pupil led from the ſimpleſt perceptions of MORAL DUTIES, to the more ſolemn and ſublime truths of NATURE and RELIGION.—But as the power of fully COMMUNICATING the knowledge we may have acquired, is of equal value with that of *acquiring* knowledge: This forms an object of attention,

attention, of no leſs *importance*, and not leſs NEGLECTED in the Modern Syſtem of Education. The knowledge we cannot *communicate* is nearly USELESS. Communication of knowledge is twofold; by *Converſation* and by *Writing*—to riſe to Eaſe and Elegance in either is *rare!* Few indeed are to be found who excel in BOTH! they who are capable of *converſing* with Eaſe and Elegance, ſeldom being able to diſplay their talents to advantage by the *Pen*; and thoſe who *write* with moſt preciſion and accuracy, being, in general, but very ill qualified to ſupport the animated flow of elegant *Converſation*. This may, in great meaſure, be accounted for. Both are ARTS, and to be LEARNED; but both are equally neglected in our *early* years. Hence we come into the World, with only the MATERIALS of Converſation, which we have glean'd from BOOKS, but without ſufficient knowledge of the Rules which ſhould direct us in the USE of them. Theſe we are left to acquire by the mere *imitation* of thoſe with whom we are by accident, thrown into Company. Thoſe of a *bold*, LOQUACIOUS diſpoſition, are conſtitutionally

ſtitutionally impelled to exert their *Natural* talents, *blunder* into proprieties; and are taught, by repeated mortifications, to avoid *glaring* defects—while the more modeſt and diffident, conſcious of a want of *Words*, or of PROPRIETY of Expreſſion, become every day more ſilent and reſerved—and fatally acquieſce under the mortifying inferiority of a *want* of utterance, and *fluency* of Expreſſion, becauſe they *falſely* conceive it to be the *defect* of NATURE, and that it is not to be *overcome*, or *remedied*, by human art or Induſtry.

To prevent, or remove theſe defects, therefore, the Scholars are taught to WRITE the Language as well as SPEAK it, with propriety. To this end they are conſtantly accuſtomed to write their OWN Sentiments, upon Subjects adapted to their ſeveral talents, and degrees of Improvement. The *grammatical* Errors, or *inelegancies* of Diction, that are found in their Exerciſes, are pointed out and corrected, *before them*, and they are taught by what means they may, in future, arrive at accuracy and preciſion, as well in

in point of *grammatical* conſtruction, as in the elegant *arrangement* of their Sentiments. By thus exerciſing their Faculties, they not only become well verſed in Orthography, Grammar, and Diction, but the mind itſelf imperceptibly acquires the HABIT of THINKING METHODICALLY; and of EXPRESSING it's thoughts with CORRECTNESS and FACILITY. The Subjects appointed for them, are ſuch as relate to the *Proprieties* of conduct in *civil* and *ſocial Life*, and what are their reſpective duties towards GOD and MAN. By this they learn, how they *ought* to act in every poſſible ſituation into which they may be thrown: ſo that under *whatever* Circumſtances, they may not be obliged to ſtudy WHAT their Duty is, when they ought, without hefitation, to PERFORM it. A Circumſtance but too common; thouſands being betrayed into acts of Injuſtice and Impropriety, not ſo much from any propenſity to *Ill*, as from their total IGNORANCE of the *Laws* of Morality, and, conſequently, of PROPRIETY and DIGNITY of Conduct.

With reſpect to Converſation—the Utility of being able to deliver, in ELEGANT Language, whetever the mind conceives, muſt be too obvious, to require any apology for attempting to inculcate ſo *deſirable* an accompliſhment.

How many excellent Men and Women are there to be found, the diſplay of whoſe Underſtandings, in converſation, would at once do *Honour* to themſelves, and be of the higheſt *Uſe* to Sociey, whoſe tongues, for want of the habit, are, as it were, *locked up*, and who paſs a long Life of SILENCE and RESERVE, except among their moſt familiar *Friends*—the meaning of whoſe Converſation, even with *them*, is rather to be *gueſſed at*, than perfectly to be *conceived* from their mode of utterance. If we are led to enquire into the *Cauſe* of this, we ſhall find it to ariſe either from a *want* of words to *expreſs* their thoughts, or of METHOD properly to ARRANGE them; and the conſequent Fear of falling into Improprieties, which may ſubject them to the RIDICULE of thoſe, bleſt with *happier* talents. What adds to the misfortune is, that this conſciouſneſs of defect, is moſt felt by thoſe of the BEST

BEST Underſtanding: Ignorance being, generally, bold and loquacious, highly conceited of itſelf, and acting with unbluſhing intrepidity, on all occaſions.

To give the Pupils a habit of expreſſing their Thoughts with *eaſe* in CONVERSATION, they are encouraged to ſpeak their Sentiments, upon any Subject that occurs, with the utmoſt freedom. They are conſtantly required to expreſs the SENSE of what they read, in Words *different* from thoſe uſed by the Author, and to attend *minutely* to the ARRANGEMENT of their thoughts, as well as to the *choice* of WORDS. When either is defective they are directed to ſuch as are proper, and when proper, they receive the juſt praiſe due to their attention. Thus, from their early years, they grow up in the *habit* of exerciſing their MENTAL Faculties with ACCURACY and PRECISION. Beſides, it is of no ſmall conſequence to the improvement of their underſtanding, that they are inſtructed more by CONVERSATIONS on every Subject capable of informing them, than by

by BOOKS.——The *written* Language is often *ambiguous* and *equivocal*; and from a choice of words, not uſed in common life, difficult to be underſtood by young Minds. The colloquial, on the contrary, is ever *preciſe* and *intelligible*, even to to the *loweſt* capacity, when not diſfigured by *Pedantry* and *Affectation*; the tone of Voice, Look, and Geſture, being a perfect COMMENT on what is uttered by the *Speaker*. Nothing is more common than for young People, from a *falſe ſhame*, and fear of being thought *ignorant*, or *inattentive*, to ſay they perfectly *comprehend* what is ſaid to them, or what they read, when they *do not*—and indeed through precipitation to FLATTER themſelves that they do. What can be thought more expedient to *prevent* this habit of falſe ſhame, and of *half* underſtanding things, than the obliging them, while under inſtruction, to repeat the SENSE of what is ſaid to them in their OWN Words and PHRASEOLOGY? by which an opportunity is offered of correcting, and removing every *low*, *vulgar*, Barbariſm, that, from the force of *Habit*, ſo often diſgraces the converſation

verſation of perſons of even *ſuperior* Education, and to inſpire them with a love for elegance and propriety, both of thought and expreſſion.

Having thus exhibited his Methods of *forming* the UNDERSTANDING of his Pupils, by the medium of inſtructing them in their *native Language*, the writer chearfully ſubmits them to Mankind.—During the conſtant Practice of this Art, for more than twenty years, it has invariably been his aim to arrive at the *knowledge* of the human mind, and the beſt means of IMPROVING it, of which this is as *particular* a Sketch, as the nature of ſo extenſive a plan will admit. He moſt ſincerely wiſhes, his preſent attempt may, by ſhewing the poſſibility of *extending* the knowledge of Youth, at an EARLIER Age than is commonly ſuppoſed, awaken the *general* attention to ſo *important* a Concern; and excite the generous Emulation of others to contribute, in like manner, to the general good; as well as induce PARENTS to judge by *Compariſon*, whether the means employed

ployed to cultivate the minds of their offspring, are calculated to produce the effects, for which alone Education is valuable, viz. the CULTIVATION of the UNDERSTANDING, and the improvement of the HEART.

Of the plan itſelf it may *juſtly* be affirmed, that it is not the viſionary production of SPECULATION, but the reſult of EXPERIENCE. The Writer is happy in being able to ſay, that the ESSAYS of his Scholars are much admired, widely diffuſed, and well known to many of the *firſt Families* in in this Kingdom—and that he has in his poſſeſſion many *undeniable Teſtimonies*, which ſufficiently evince its PROPRIETY, and extenſive SUCCESS.

It will eaſily be ſeen, by thoſe to whom the good Education of their Children is a *ſerious* concern, that, though this plan is intended for the ſervice of the Fair Sex, the ſame mode of inſtruction muſt be ſtill MORE neceſſary and advantageous in the Cultivation of the minds of BOYS—with what *Propriety*, it might become

come part of *their* inſtruction alſo, is left to the *ſerious* Conſideration of the PARENTAL part of Mankind; more eſpecially as it is well known, that not *an article* of this plan is taught, in the manner here laid down, in *any* SEMINARY in this KINGDOM; of which, the very few *good Speakers*, or *Readers*, that grace our Pulpits, Senate, or Bar, is a moſt evident proof. The Writer is not without hope, however, that the Conſiderations of its UTILITY and IMPORTANCE, offered now to the Public, may be productive of ſome *Amendment* in that Article; and that among our other rapid Advances to excellence in the liberal Arts, this attempt to turn the attention of Mankind to the RIGHT *Management* of the MENTAL faculties in *early youth*, the only SOLID Baſis on which to raiſe a ſuperſtructure of every branch of *elegant* and *uſeful* Education, will meet with due ENCOURAGEMENT.

Though the above plan is profeſſedly calculated for the improvement of Ladies in their *earlieſt*

earlieſt Years, yet the Writer cannot diſmiſs the ſubject, without hinting how highly advantageous his mode of inſtruction may prove to thoſe of more MATURE age, who may wiſh to *improve* their knowledge of the *Belles Lettres*, or acquire a TASTE for them. To attain a *critical* knowledge of our BEST Writers, in Proſe and Verſe; and to be able to READ in ſuch a manner, as with CERTAINTY to arrive at the SENSE of the Author before them, and to DELIVER that Senſe with ENERGY and PRECISION, as well as to WRITE the Language with *grammatical* purity and elegance; are objects of no little conſequence and advantage to Perſons of whatever rank or ſex.

Extraordinary as the aſſertion may appear, to thoſe who fatally *acquieſce* under a want of improvement, that Perſons, at almoſt *any Age*, may acquire the above-mentioned Qualifications, by a very *moderate* degree of Application, under his inſtruction, the Writer is happy in being able to

to assure them that he can give the most *undeniable* evidence of its TRUTH.

He is firmly persuaded many Ladies would endeavour to *extend* their Acquaintance with Literature, in this way, were they not checked by the supposition, that, it is *too late* in life to make any *further* progress in the Cultivation of their *understandings*, by the acquisition of an Art, that, it is *imagined*, requires *peculiar* powers, and a *pliability* of mind which the warm season of *Youth* only can afford: But certainly no reasoning can be more absurd. It can never be *too late* to IMPROVE. Whatever we WISH to attain, which depends upon the exertion of our INTELLECTUAL faculties, is ever in our POWER. The *truth* of this Maxim has been happily experienced by *many* Ladies of rank and worth, whom he has had the honour to attend in a PRIVATE Course of Instruction, many years after they had *finished* their youthful Studies; who have gratefully acknowledged, that the Benefits they

 received

received from his methods of teaching, in the ſpace of a FEW MONTHS ONLY, have greatly exceeded their moſt SANGUINE EXPECTATIONS: and that the Study itſelf, ſo far from being *laborious*, is PLEASING; as every Leſſon offers *new* truths to the UNDERSTANDING, which bring with them a Conſciouſneſs of their tendency to IMPROVE and ENLIGHTEN the Mind; and enable it to exert it's Faculties, with *eaſe*, and with a degree of PRECISION before UNKNOWN.

Hanover-ſtreet, Long-Acre.

*** LADIES attended at BOARDING-SCHOOLS, or at their own HOUSES.